The Central Seminary Bulletin

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The 1956 Commencement

With the Rev. Paul C. Empie, D.D., LL.D., L.H.D., Th.D., Executive Director of the National Lutheran Council, as the preacher, and with a graduating class of seven, the Commencement service will be held on Thursday evening. May 3rd at 8:00 o'clock in the Salem Lutheran Church, Fremont.

In all probability the Alumni Association will plan its annual meeting in connection with the occasion, as usual. It is understood that officials of the Women's Auxiliary have already laid plans for their meeting to be held earlier the same day.

Commencement is an occasion on which Central delights to have its graduates and former students return, and its friends to visit the campus. Hence, to you—whoever, and wherever you are—we even now invite you to come to our 1956 Commencement.

The Class of 1906

Few of our readers will be prepared for this, but according to the records it is true. One of the largest graduating classes of the institution, prior to last year's, was that of 1906. There were twelve in it. Seven of them, and perhaps eight are still living. These eight are: William C. Heidenreich, Hampton, Nebraska; J. M. Holzberger, Tabitha Home, Lincoln, Nebraska; Hermann L. Lenser, Hanover, Kansas; Ralph W. Livers, Fremont, Nebraska; J. N. Marxen, Columbus, Nebraska; Emil E. Moser, Germany; F. C. Schuldt, Fremont, Nebraska; and Oscar Woods, South Bend, Pennsylvania.

The class has been a worthy, even a notable one. For their long and faithful service the Seminary and the Church are sincerely grateful. To them we offer our hearty congratulations. Upon them we invoke divine blessings.

The Seminary would fondly hope that a class reunion might be held at the approaching commencement, and would pledge any possible help toward that end.

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From the President's Heart to Yours

This time our **Salute** is to Councilmen, approximately forty-five thousand men (and an increasing number of women) who have been honored by their respective congregations in delegating to them limited authority and special responsibility. At least for the most part, they constitute a group of individuals with unusual dedication, vision, zeal, generosity, patience, and considerateness. To employ the New Testament phrase, they are "men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom". The Scriptural basis for their office and their chief functions is in the early part of the sixth chapter of the Book of The Acts of the Apostles.

The ULCA has always been keenly aware of the importance of this group, appreciative of the significant service rendered by it and desirous to assist in any possible way enabling it to render even more effective service. Hence there have been published several excellent booklets and other materials for use by the earnest councilman, in his endeavor to see more clearly the proper relationship between him and the pastor and between him and the congregation, as well as to gain a better understanding of all that is involved in his high office. This concern on the part of the ULCA is further emphasized by the fact that some years ago at one of its conventions it observed a Special Order in recognition of Church Councils. In that service, among other things, there were confessions and prayers. The confessions were: 1) that the Church has conceived of the Council's task too lightly, 2) that the councilmen conceive of their tasks too lightly, and 3) that pastors assume too many duties that should be cared for by councilmen. The prayers were: 1) that councilmen may realize their relation to the Word, 2) that they may regard the pure character of their lives, 3) that they may do their duty in promoting the Kingdom at home and abroad, and 4) that pastors and congregations may rightly appreciate the work of their councils.

Are you a councilman? Would you not like to read again the **Order for installation of a Church Council** on pages 288 and 289 of the Common Service Book?

E. B. Reisler

Contributions

Even though there is no longe fresh way to say "Thank you" to donors, every contribution, large small, begets within us fresh appr tion and a new warmth of heart zeal. Hence with sincere and he thanks we acknowledge the follov gifts:

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For: Mr. Louis Woerman
Friends at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Glasco, Kansas .....
For: Mr. Leland Studt

Building Begins

Even though the ground-breaking the new married students apart house was announced a month ago, ual work on the project has only re ly begun. However, unless severe w er or other obstacles hinder it is bel that construction will proceed apace.

It will be recalled that the prov of this important facility at this ti stimulated by a generous benefactio such purpose from Mr. and Mrs. He Stelk of Fremont.

The construction will consist of t units and will be placed on the nort corner of our block. In this conn we would invite our readers to do things: 1) Come to see us, 2) reme us in their gifts, and 3) don't forg in their prayers, public and private.

"A sermon is no sermon in wh cannot hear the heartbeat".—Longf

The Gospel of Lent

In recent years there has been a marked increase in the number of Christian people who observe Lent. There is a growing awareness that Lent has to do, not with external practices such as fasting and other disciplines, but with the basic fact of redemption and atonement: God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself; that it is a season of intensive meditation on the passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord. When properly understood, the forty days of Lent move like a mighty crescendo toward Holy Week, Maundy Thursday, and Easter.

The dominant themes in this Lenten symphony are three in number. First, the reality and magnitude of man's lostness and enslavement in sin, guilt, and death. Second, the unbelievable grace of God, who in Christ entered into this hopeless predicament of man and set him free from the 'tyrants' which held him captive. Third, the reality of the new life which is the result of this mighty act of redemption, a life in which we are called to participate in faith, a life of grateful and obedient love and radiant hope. The overtones which accompany this triad are many and varied. Together they constitute the Lenten Gospel.

The New Testament presents this theme in an almost endless series of variations. Every conceivable figure of speech, every register of human language is employed to give voice to that which can never be completely said. There are the four gospels which tell the story of the Passion from the Upper Room to Calvary and Joseph's tomb. We sense, like a mighty diapason, the obedience of the Son of Man which carries him relentlessly to the cross; we hear the many-voiced flutes and strings of anguish and sorrow; there is the silent melancholy and despair of the paschal Sabbath, broken by the trumpets and trombones of the resurrection. Here is the quiet agony of Gethsemane; the shouting and the tumult before the Praetorium; the awful darkness over the three crosses erected at the Place of the Skull. And in the midst of it all, the frightful disfigurement of him whom the Roman called 'the King of the Jews'. Here, at last, we hear the triumphant shout of a victory almost won. And then death. But then, beyond all hope, comes the sunrise of Easter; a heavy stone is moved from the mouth of a tomb by unseen hands; young men in white garments are saying: 'He is not here; he is risen, as he said!'

This is the event which from that moment filled the thoughts and lives of those who witnessed it. Led into understanding by the Holy Spirit they shouted out its meaning from one end of the Mediterranean world to the other, preaching, teaching, writing. They spoke of it in terms of a most costly sacrifice brought on behalf of man by Holy Love; of its finality, like the finality of death itself. They spoke of a ransom incalculably precious paid by God in person for the liberation of the slaves of sin and death; of a judgment pronounced at an eternal tribunal; of penalties meted out and assumed by the Lord of heaven and earth to expiate the guilt of man; of debts paid and the bill of particulars nailed to a tree; of a love that freely gave itself for the unworthy. But they also spoke of a desperate battle, with God's Son arrayed against all the powers of sin, death, and destruction; of a champion who entered the lists for mankind against the 'old wicked foe'; of one who, in dying, won a victory beyond imagination glorious, whereby life itself was brought back from the caverns of hell and the grave. It is one great paean of reconciliation, joy, and hope, 'like the sound of a great Amen'. That is the Lenten Gospel, the song which will ring through all eternity in the habitations of the righteous (Pa. 118).

Throughout the centuries men never ceased to brood over the meaning of this gospel. As they sought to put it into words they devised theories which would in some measure express it. The earliest of such theories, one which dominated Christian thinking for a thousand years, is sometimes called the 'Patristic Theory'. In vivid imagery it spoke of the tyranny of sin, devil, and death established on the cunning of Satan and the disobedience of man. But then it spoke of the coming of God himself for the rescue and redemption of his fallen creatures. Irenaeus (ca. 200 A.D.) asks: For what purpose did Christ come down from heaven. and gives the answer: Christ came down from heaven that he might destroy sin, overcome death, and give life to man. Behind this theory the conviction that only God could redeem man and that in Jesus the love of God and his mighty arm accomplished just that. Rediscovered at the time of the Reformation, this view of the atonement rings out in the great hymn by Luther, based on an ancient Sequence (Victimae Paschali):

Christ Jesus lay in death's strong hands,
For our offences given;
But now at God's right hand he stands
And brings us life from heaven.
It was a strange and dreadful strife
When Life and death contended;
The victory remained with Life,
The reign of death was ended.

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A thousand years after Irenaeus, Anselm of Canterbury (ca. 1100) asked: Why did God become man? In his answer he is concerned with the dreadful weight of guilt resting on man who had dared to rise in rebellion against his Creator and Lord. By his sin man had offended against the honor of God and challenged his justice. For this the penalty was death. But God in his mercy wanted to save man. In order that this might be done without prejudice to God's justice, the debt of man had to be paid and satisfaction rendered to God's honor. Since man was unable to do this, God sent his Son into the world who became man so that he might die in the place of man. His life, being the life of the Son of God, has infinite value and therefore could atone for the infinite guilt of mankind. This 'Anselmic Theory' of the atonement determined Christian thought for eight hundred years. It eloquently expresses the fearful reality of sin and guilt and the incomprehensible cost of their expiation. This too, is a continuing element in the Church's Lenten meditation.

A third theory was developed by Peter Abelard, a younger contemporary of Anselm, in opposition to that of the venerable archbishop. In this, the so-called 'Subjective Theory', he contended that the atonement is not to be understood in terms of God's justice but in terms of his love. It was the love of God which poured itself out in suffering and death in order that man, overwhelmed by such grace, might be brought to repentance, renounce his rebellion, and learn to love God in return. This theory does not recognize the terrible reality of human guilt as fully as it should, and the Church never accepted it. But despite its shortcomings it also speaks of that which is at the very heart of the atonement: The love and grace of God, the Shepherd-love which lays down its life for the sheep, and of the love which this should awaken in us.

These, then, are the abiding motifs which have been embodied in ever new patterns into the great Lenten Chorale of the Christian Church. Such is the meaning of Lent. Again, in the weeks before us, we are being summoned to contemplate this great and fearful wonder, to allow ourselves to be judged by it, and to apprehend it anew as our most ultimate concern. Here is redemption, worked out once and for all for all m kind. On this ground, at this very ment, your case and mine is being with completely, definitely, and eter

The Women's Auxilia

A meeting of the Executive Com tee of the embryonic Women's Auxi of Central Seminary, together with Thomas D. Rinde as representativ the faculty, and the Rev. George P. K representing the Board, was held re ly at the Seminary. Initial steps taken toward the presentation of a stitution, and the effecting of a per ent organization, in connection with approaching Commencement. Mrs. M Ruwe, Hooper, Nebraska, is the P dent of the group.

Would You Like to Help?

About two months ago it was stat these columns that Central Seminary in search of a donor of a print o Martin Luther film. Hardly had Bulletin gotten into the mail when Oscar Lyders, Fremont, brought a ficient check. Soon thereafter, were two other kind and deeply app ated offers of the same equipment.

Now there are other projects in w we at the Seminary are definitely i ested, and confidently believe that ot learning of them, will likewise be interested. One of those is the bin of the complete file of the Luth Quarterly since 1923. This will approximately $150.00. Another is to vide the funds necessary for our pr ing the complete set of the new A can Edition of Luther's Works t published in fifty-five volumes durin next several years. The amount neces for this will be approximately $2 This would lend itself admirably memorial gift, and could well be sui marked. Still another possibility is of providing $300.00 with which to plete our Weimar Edition (Germa Luther's Works. For years this has the standard work in its field. We al have 70 of its volumes on our she No Lutheran Theological Seminary ary can long afford to be without

In each case, it will have to be a ter of first come, first served. T you.

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